

the JOBS bill—which I am optimistic we will pass in the very near future—we have included antitax shelter legislation that will make sure transactions are done for legitimate business reasons and not solely for tax benefits.

We have also included provisions that would impose stiffer penalties on any taxpayers who engage in shelter transactions. It is also time to crack down on expatriation practices, corporate inversions, SLOs, abuses in the charitable area, Enron-related tax shelters, and offshore abusive tax schemes. And we should devote more resources to IRS enforcement. Dollars spent there will bring in several times as much in additional revenue raised.

And last, but certainly not least, we need to set a goal, a benchmark of where we are going on tax compliance. Today, I proposed that we reach at least a 90 percent tax compliance rate by the end of the decade. By 2010, at least 90 percent of Americans should be filing their taxes and paying their dues. It is not too much to ask. Now, it will not be easy, but that does not mean that it cannot be done. I know we can achieve it through the methods I just outlined.

With the growing deficit and the upcoming retirement of the baby boom generation, increasing tax compliance is more important than ever. And it is also one of the easiest ways to raise more revenue for our Nation. We are not talking about raising taxes—we are simply asking all Americans to pay their fair share as citizens of this great Nation. By reaching a 90-percent compliance rate, we would raise at least \$100 billion more each year. This funding would go a long way toward strengthening Social Security or helping our classrooms or paying down the deficit.

April 15 is just around the corner. I encourage every citizen to do what is right, to stand up for your country and make your contribution. Here in Congress, we will keep working to make it easier for our honest taxpayers to comply and to make it harder for those dishonest folks to cheat the system. Together, we will seal the tax gap and help the economy.

#### SENATOR BOXER'S TRIGGER LOCK AMENDMENT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last month the Senate considered and passed the Boxer trigger lock amendment by a 70-27 vote. Senator BOXER's amendment would require that all handguns sold by a dealer come with a child safety device, such as a lock, a lock box, or technology built into the gun itself. Further, it would direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission to develop standards for child safety devices. The need for this legislation is clear, and I supported its passage.

According to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, each year teenagers and children are involved in more than 10,000 accidental shootings in

which close to 800 people die. Further, about 1,500 children age 14 and under are treated in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional firearm injuries. About 38 percent of them have injuries severe enough to require hospitalization.

In addition to accidental shootings, according to the Brady Campaign, every year 1,300 children use firearms to commit suicide. Unlike suicide attempts using other methods, suicide attempts with guns are nearly always fatal. These children are given no second chance.

It does not have to be this way. If gun manufacturers put locking or other safety mechanisms on guns, or dealers sold handguns with safety devices, many shootings could be avoided, and fewer children would die each year.

The gun industry immunity legislation, to which Senator BOXER's amendment was attached, would have provided unprecedented protection from liability to gun manufacturers and dealers, even in cases where their own gross negligence or recklessness led to someone being injured or killed. I opposed the immunity bill and was pleased that it failed to pass the Senate. However, Senator BOXER's trigger lock amendment passed with bipartisan support. Given that, I hope the Senate takes up and passes that legislation this year.

#### ASBESTOS LITIGATION

Mr. BREAU. Mr. President, Senator LANDRIEU and I rise today to add our voices to those who have been calling for a comprehensive national solution to the asbestos litigation problem. Several members of both parties have recently come to the floor to discuss this very issue and we want to join with them in urging our colleagues to address this matter with immediate legislation.

I have always believed that one of the greatest freedoms in this country is the ability of ordinary citizens to seek redress in an impartial court of law from other citizens or businesses—no matter how large or powerful. However, in the case of asbestos litigation the system no longer is able to meet this goal. The courts are so backed up with asbestos lawsuits, many of which are brought by individuals who are not yet sick or may never get sick, that those victims who are truly suffering from asbestos-related illnesses are not receiving compensation and businesses are going bankrupt in the process.

Asbestos litigation is a serious and growing problem in our home state of Louisiana. For the benefit of victims, union members, and businesses in Louisiana—both large and small—that are suffering the consequences of this crisis, we urge the Senate to resolve this problem as soon as possible. Let me be clear: we want a bill that will provide guaranteed, fair compensation to deserving victims in our state and around

the country. And, we want a bill that will provide certainty for victims and businesses in Louisiana and elsewhere that have been caught up in this crisis.

I am becoming increasingly troubled by reports that negotiations between the parties on the asbestos bill are reaching a standstill. Too much work and tireless hours of negotiation have gone into this bill to let it become yet another marker in the growing graveyard of failed legislation. I would like to use this opportunity to urge all parties in this matter to continue working in good faith with one another to find agreement on the issues that are still outstanding.

A final deal on asbestos will not be easy and it will require more concessions from all parties. I know a number of my colleagues have worked unflinchingly to try and get this issue resolved. I commend them for all their effort and work. However, it is also important that we realize how close we are to not having any bill at all. I am concerned that by hastily pushing forward legislation that only has partial support, we will effectively kill this bill. We cannot stand back and allow the current system to continue to spiral out of control. Another failed cloture vote will not help victims, nor will it help business. This is an issue that we should be able to vote out of the Senate, not by 60 votes, but by 70 or 80. We must continue to work together to this end. The asbestos litigation system is broken and it must be fixed.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise to join with my colleague, the senior Senator from Louisiana, to urge the Senate to enact meaningful asbestos litigation reform this Congress. I am equally concerned about the impact that this escalating crisis is having in our own state of Louisiana.

The example of just one company illustrates how this ongoing litigation is affecting Louisiana. In 1978, McDermott, headquartered in Louisiana, acquired Babcock & Wilcox, B&W, a premier commercial boiler-maker and provider of other power generation equipment. B&W was the leading manufacturer of boilers in the United States. In line with United States government specifications, all of these boilers were insulated with asbestos. Now many years later, the company has been subjected to an avalanche of asbestos claims. In fact, B&W had no recourse other than to file for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Because of the uncertainty of its asbestos liability and the resulting inability to satisfactorily reorganize the finances of the company, McDermott's union employees in my state are adversely impacted. Just last week, representatives from my staff and Senator BREAU's staff attended a meeting of the management and union labor at McDermott's facility in Morgan City, LA, to discuss this problem. We now have a petition signed by 1,000 of these workers asking that we solve this problem as soon as possible.